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April 4, 2013

House Committee on Land Use
State Capitol, 900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2254-1 (Urban Growth Boundaries) - Support

Dear Chair Clem and Committee Members:

HB 2254-1 would establish a framework for rulemaking by the Land Conservation and Development Commission that will establish a simpler and more standardized methodology that cities may use to evaluate their urban growth boundaries to determine whether additional capacity is needed to meet population and employment growth and, if so, how and where to accommodate that need. 1000 Friends of Oregon supports HB 2254-1 for the following reasons:

- The objectives of the advisory group developing this proposal were to create a more standard, data and research based methodology to evaluate UGBs that would be less expensive and complex for cities to use, while retaining the land use planning programs goals: livable, walkable, compact towns and cities; housing opportunities for all Oregon's citizens; capacity for employment opportunities; and conserving the land base for Oregon's #2 industry, agriculture, and forest products.
- We participated in the advisory groups that met frequently for over a year and deliberated, tested, and discussed each element of this proposal. This necessary work showed that early drafts would be unworkable for many cities or were flawed in other ways. But diligent work and long hours by many advisory group members, which included testing how various proposals could be implemented by sample cities, eventually reached a point where advisory group members were confident that the framework established in this proposal will lead to rulemaking by LCDC that can accomplish the objectives we started with.
- HB 2254-1 directs LCDC to:
 - use empirical data to establish ranges in which cities will determine their own land needs;
 - establish standard definitions for terms that are now ambiguous and open to interpretation and litigation, such as "vacant land," "redevelopable land," etc...;
 - adopt rules consistent with current and projected demographic and population forecast and trends, to ensure the needs of all Oregonians are accommodated.
- HB 2254-1 focuses on ensuring that cities provide land that can be provided with infrastructure, and requires more robust planning and implementation of those plans for infrastructure than exists in current law. Job growth and residential growth in every community in Oregon has occurred overwhelmingly on land that is already supplied with infrastructure, or realistically will be – not on raw land added to UGBs. The 2013 League of Cities report *State of the Cities* demonstrates

that every Oregon city has a tremendous backlog in infrastructure maintenance and a long list of unbuilt infrastructure e projects needed to serve existing development. It is time for Oregon’s land use program – and for those of other state agencies – to focus in a more coordinated and robust manner on providing infrastructure to lands already inside UGBs.

- If a city determines that additional land is needed in its UGB to accommodate population or employment growth, HB 2254-1 provides a clear process for determining which lands to add to the UGB.
- Overall, HB 2254-1 provides a framework for LCDC to enact rules based on empirical information, demographic trends, and local experience, which will result in local decision making that is faster, less contentious, and less complex.

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on HB 2254-1, which we support.

We urge the Committee to pass HB 2254 with the -1 amendments. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy".

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Policy Director